

Meeting discussions from the 7th meeting of the LRM Standards Committee.
Wednesday, December 1st, 2004
notes by Erik Hubl

Attendance:

Jim Langtry, Lancaster County Engineering
Scott Anderson, J.D. Edwards Honors Program
Gail Knapp, City of Omaha – Planning
Kirk Larson, Sarpy County GIS
Marcus Tooze, GIS Workshop
Eric Herbert, Sarpy County GIS
Elaine Thompson, NE Dept. of Property Assessment & Taxation
Jim Koch, NE Dept. of Property Assessment & Taxation
Jesse Whidden, J.D. Edwards Honors Program
Cathy Lang, NE Dept. of Property Assessment & Taxation
Janet Reed, Otoe County Register of Deeds
Henry Schimke, J.D. Edwards Honors Program
Larry Zink, NE GIS Steering Committee
Bill Sheldon, Terrascan, Inc.
Erik Hubl, Lancaster County Assessor/Register of Deeds

Both Dan Silvis and John Beran were absent.

The meeting began at 1:07 PM. There were no corrections to the minutes. This was a joint meeting of the NE Land Records Modernization Standards Advisory Committee and the NPAT JD Edwards Working Group.

We went around the room and made brief introductions. Next Larry Z. asked Cathy L. to give us an update on NPAT and the JD Edwards program. It started about a year ago as an outshoot from the Rotary Club, Design Studio Project. There was a need to examine what data exists in the counties and at the state and the need for greater access to information. Bob Wickersham had pointed out the vast technical differences that currently exist between various counties in Nebraska. Cathy L. said her agency needs state-wide sales file information as part of her statute defined duties. By early summer 2004 the project started. The JD Edwards students needed a focal point to help define what the project is. Around that same time the ASI contract was set to expire but a variance was granted until June 2007 at which time it will have to go back out to bids. She kept urging them to keep the GIS concept in mind and arranged to visit Lancaster County where Rob Ogden and Scott Gaines of the Assessor/Register of Deeds office showed them how the system works.

Erik H. was asked to speak next about Lancaster County GIS. Erik provided a handout that illustrated the parcel layer. From 1995 to 2004, the parcel count had grown from 86,000 to almost 102,000 parcels. He described some of the uses of the system and pointed out that the use of a unique parcel identifier was the key in connecting to external databases of information. The only coding performed on the GIS map is that parcel identifier which is then joined with data from the CAMA (Computer Aided Mass Appraisal) program. He stressed the importance of understanding the existing workflow to begin crafting the type of uses and the queries that will want to be made. By utilizing

additional layers of GIS information it can also be possible to produce derivative maps that portray important information that could be used as input to the CAMA. Layers such as soil surveys and floodplains to name a few. Erik pointed out the relative ease of sharing this data with other departments and agencies as well as the computers ability to reproduce results easily. And by making this information available to the public via methods like an Internet Map Service, it helps add credibility to the office and the office holder.

Bill S. spoke next and utilized a PowerPoint program to help illustrate some points. He said a lot of the success depends on the imagination of the Assessor. He used the word 'Navigation' to define his first point. The task is to navigate to a piece of land or to information about that land. With a GIS this can be done visually using the map or from a database approach by searching for an address. He next used the term 'Geo-Auditing' and made reference to a zoning map. With the public, it's all about trust. GIS is just another information element in the system. He then illustrated how the GIS can be used to fill in some data. Geography based data entry using spatial layers to populate fields. Layers like soils/landuse/parcels and deriving results like price per acre and sales ratios. A lot of discussion took place at this point regarding the creation of market areas on the GIS but in general it was felt that the intuition and knowledge of the appraiser will always play an important part in these determinations. Bill summarized by saying we need to get away from the hand calculators and let the computers analytical capabilities derive most of the information that is needed in the system.

Kirk L. provided a synopsis of their approach at Sarpy County. They have reviewed the entire workflow process from point A to point Z involving all departments. They have analyzed the process used for filing deeds, plat submissions, 521 forms and so on. They are looking to integrate GIS into the entire flow of county operations. By closely studying the existing process, they have been able to create elaborate workflow diagrams that illustrate how the present system is riddled with duplicate points of data entry as well as insufficient checks and balances. Based on this knowledge of the workflow, they are currently designing a model flowchart for the entry of data. Their GIS department exists as a separate entity and they have good cooperation from the various departments involved.

Cathy L. said she would like to some sort of repository that commercial CAMA packages could feed into. At the very least, she would see this need for the 9 counties under NPAT's jurisdiction. She sees the importance of analysis of the process and believes that the filing of deeds is the first step in that process.

The JD Edwards working group is just focusing on the Assessor perspective. Larry Z. pointed out that the flow of information involves entities like the County Board, Register, Treasurer as well as state agencies, cities, NRD's and schools. He crafted a diagram on the board to illustrate this interaction.

It was stated that we need a "straight-line" RFP that would be an "on-ramp" for all counties to get involved. And as for getting data into a state system, it needs to be able to accommodate the format of various GIS systems. Seeing what Lancaster and Sarpy have done is very valuable. Cathy issued a challenge to the LRM committee: To work on a common parcel identifier (PIN) standard.